of a Moorish cafe, the hour of Ramadan being past. In the courtyard, near us, some camels in heat were fighting. A keeper was shouting at them. The flocks of goats were returning; their hasty feet still made, as last year, the sound of a sterile shower.

From all the houses of gray earth a slender vapor arose, a blue smoke that soon enveloped the whole oasis and made it seem remote. The sky to the west was a very pure blue, so deep that it seemed still saturated with light. The silence became wonderful. You could not even imagine any song breaking it. I felt that I liked this landscape better than any other, perhaps; here more than anywhere else nature encourages contemplation.

Biskra

Yesterday we were in the gardens; we followed the paths that first led us to N'Msid then to Bab-el-Derb. We reached the old fort and returned by way of Sidi-Barkat. The walk was a long one and Em. was tired out by it. Athman was with us and Fedor Rosenberg; and Larbi accompanied us. We had coffee at the entrance to N'Msid in front of the bed of the Oued and the mountains of the Aures.

I do not like this landscape so much as, on the other side, the vague expanse of the desert. Playing dominoes with us, Larbi constantly cheated and was charming. I am expecting Jammes with a delightful impatience. The earth here speaks a different language, but one that I understand now.

My room last year, on the ground floor of the hotel; with my window open, I was separated from the outside only by the balustrade; with a jump one could be over it. Sadek, Athman's big brother, and several others from the old Biskra would come and rest in my room, during Ramadan, before returning to their village. I had dates, cakes, syrops,

and jellies. It was night; Sadek played the flute and it was easy to remain silent for a long time. At night I closed only the blinds. All the sounds from outside came in, and each morning they would waken me before dawn and I would go to the edge of the desert to see the sunrise. At that moment would pass Lascif s flock, made up of the poor people's goats; since they had no garden, they would entrust their goats to him every morning and Lascif would lead them out to graze in the desert He would go knocking from door to door before dawn; each door would open and let pass a few goats. As he left the village he had more than sixty.

He would go off very far with them, toward the Hot Fountain, where the chokeweeds are and the euphorbiaceae. There was also a huge ram on which he sometimes rode, he told me, when the way was difficult, or else to pass the time, for he did not know how to play the flute. One morning when he had left without passing under my window, I went to